

REAPPORTIONMENT PUBLIC HEARING

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LABELLE CITY HALL

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REPORTED BY:

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DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 2</p> <p>1 MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE</p> <p>2 SENATOR STEVEN A. GELLER</p> <p>3 SENATOR DURELL PEADEN, JR.</p> <p>4 SENATOR DANIEL WEBSTER</p> <p>5 REPRESENTATIVE JD ALEXANDER</p> <p>6 REPRESENTATIVE RANDY JOHN BALL</p> <p>7 REPRESENTATIVE JOHNNIE B. BYRD, JR.</p> <p>8 REPRESENTATIVE DUDLEY J. GOODLETTE</p> <p>9 REPRESENTATIVE JEFFREY D. KOTTKAMP</p> <p>10 REPRESENTATIVE BRUCE KYLE</p> <p>11 REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD MACHEK</p> <p>12 REPRESENTATIVE JERRY G. MELVIN</p> <p>13 REPRESENTATIVE MITCH NEEDELMAN</p> <p>14 REPRESENTATIVE TIMOTHY M. RYAN</p> <p>15 REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH R. SPRATT</p> <p>16 REPRESENTATIVE LESLIE WATERS</p> <p>17 REPRESENTATIVE MARK WEISSMAN</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p> <p>1 Byrd. It's my pleasure also to welcome you to this public</p> <p>2 hearing, one of many we are holding throughout the fall,</p> <p>3 and actually it started in the summer. Let me explain</p> <p>4 first the procedure by which we'll use in these public</p> <p>5 hearings. This is a public hearing, and the sole and only</p> <p>6 purpose of which is to hear from you the public on matters</p> <p>7 of redistricting. This is not a committee meeting, we will</p> <p>8 not be taking legislative action in this or subsequent</p> <p>9 public hearings; instead, this is a public forum where we</p> <p>10 have the opportunity to receive citizen input about their</p> <p>11 electoral districts.</p> <p>12 It's not time for legislative debate. All</p> <p>13 Representatives and Senators will have numerous</p> <p>14 opportunities in subsequent committee meetings and floor</p> <p>15 debates to address the wishes of members and their</p> <p>16 concerns. Today, however, is for our constituents. We</p> <p>17 must not diminish their role or voice by taking up valuable</p> <p>18 time today in debate.</p> <p>19 Following my brief remarks counsel will give a general</p> <p>20 overview of legal considerations in redistricting. Staff</p> <p>21 will then provide some specific information about census</p> <p>22 results in this region and the state. The rest is reserved</p> <p>23 for you, the citizens.</p> <p>24 Every ten years after completion of the updated</p> <p>25 national census, the Constitution requires that the Florida</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p> <p>1 PROCEEDINGS</p> <p>2 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Good morning and welcome to the panel.</p> <p>3 I'll ask the members to take your places. And I would like</p> <p>4 to thank you for coming to the public hearing this morning.</p> <p>5 Good morning again. We would like to begin the meeting</p> <p>6 this morning by saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the</p> <p>7 Flag. If you would stand and join us for the Pledge of</p> <p>8 Allegiance.</p> <p>9 (Pledge of Allegiance.)</p> <p>10 CHAIRMAN BYRD: Good morning again. My name is Johnny</p> <p>11 Byrd and I am a state representative from Plant City,</p> <p>12 Florida, House District 62. I'm chairman of the House</p> <p>13 Procedural and Redistricting Committee. It's my pleasure</p> <p>14 this morning to welcome all of you today to this public</p> <p>15 hearing. The Senators and Representatives are here to</p> <p>16 listen to the residents of this area and to consider your</p> <p>17 input in this very important process. Since these are</p> <p>18 joint meetings we have divided our responsibilities</p> <p>19 throughout the many public hearings that will be held</p> <p>20 around the state in the next few weeks. It's my pleasure</p> <p>21 at this time to introduce Senator Dan Webster who is</p> <p>22 chairman of the Senate Committee on Reapportionment.</p> <p>23 Chairman Webster will reside over today's public hearings.</p> <p>24 Chairman Webster.</p> <p>25 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Thank you, Chairman</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 5</p> <p>1 Legislature redraw the boundaries for all districts of the</p> <p>2 Florida House of Representatives, the Florida Senate, and</p> <p>3 the United States Congressional District for Florida.</p> <p>4 The Legislature will take up this task next</p> <p>5 legislative session which begins January 22nd, 2002, and</p> <p>6 ends on March 22nd, 2002. The districts we draw will first</p> <p>7 be used in the November 2002 elections.</p> <p>8 Redistricting is a central element of our</p> <p>9 representative democracy. We take this on with humility</p> <p>10 and regard to the importance of the difficulty of the job.</p> <p>11 We are committed that the process will be fair and open and</p> <p>12 inclusive. These public hearings represent a first crucial</p> <p>13 step in this process. We appreciate that we are doing the</p> <p>14 work of the people, and we want to hear from you and help</p> <p>15 you participate in a meaningful way.</p> <p>16 To encourage public participation, Senate President</p> <p>17 John McKay and House Speaker Tom Feeney have scheduled at</p> <p>18 least 22 public hearings throughout the state. All members</p> <p>19 of the Legislature's redistricting committee, as well as</p> <p>20 the local delegation members have been invited to these</p> <p>21 public hearings. For this hearing the House and Senate</p> <p>22 have designed web sites as a tool for public input and will</p> <p>23 broadcast select hearings on Florida public television</p> <p>24 stations.</p> <p>25 The web address for House and Senate legislative</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 6</p> <p>1 redistricting are available at the information table where 2 you signed in. A link will also be available from the 3 Florida Legislature's web site. The redistricting plan 4 from the State House and State Senate will be passed in the 5 form of a joint resolution and will not be subject to the 6 Governor's approval or veto, but will be reviewed by the 7 Florida Supreme Court.</p> <p>8 And the plan to determine congressional districts will 9 not be reviewed by the Supreme Court of Florida, but will 10 be subject to the Governor's approval or veto. I encourage 11 everyone to read carefully and review the 2000 Census, it 12 is the essential building block on which Florida's 13 redistricting plans will be built. The address of the 14 United States census web site is available at the 15 information table.</p> <p>16 We are here to listen and consider your voice. We 17 encourage every member of the public to testify and help us 18 craft your legislative districts. We also encourage 19 written submissions in addition to the testimony heard -- 20 the testimony during the public hearing. Everyone wishing 21 to speak must fill out a speaker's card, which also are 22 available on the back table. This is the only way that we 23 will know who wishes to speak, and after the hearing, who 24 actually spoke.</p> <p>25 Speaker cards are available, like I said, at the DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 8</p> <p>1 Legislature will be to create 25 separate, contiguous 2 districts that cover all of the people of the state. Also, 3 as the Chairman has indicated, the Legislature will divide 4 the Senate into 40 districts and the House of 5 Representatives into 120 although the Constitution does 6 allow for a number as low as 30 Senators and 80 House 7 members.</p> <p>8 The Constitution requires that the House and Senate 9 districts be consecutively numbered and of either 10 contiguous, overlapping, or identical territory.</p> <p>11 As the Chairman indicated, the session will start in 12 January and end in March, and we hope that redistricting 13 and reapportionment will be accomplished during this 14 session. If somehow that did not happen, the Governor 15 would then call the Legislature back into a special session 16 not to exceed 30 consecutive days. If that session ended 17 without the adoption of a redistricting plan for the 18 Legislature, the Attorney General would petition the 19 Florida Supreme Court to commence deliberations on a plan 20 and the court would have 60 days for the court itself to 21 draw a plan.</p> <p>22 As the chairman also indicated, the legislative plan 23 goes to the court for review when it's adopted to determine 24 its validity. And the Congressional plan, however, which 25 is a law, will go to the Governor for his approval or veto.</p> <p>DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 7</p> <p>1 sign-in table. We want to hear from as many people as 2 possible; therefore, we must limit comments to four 3 minutes. On behalf of Senate President John McKay and 4 Speaker of the House, Tom Feeney, and the members of the 5 Florida Legislature I look forward to working with all of 6 you on this historic and important task.</p> <p>7 At this time I will recognize former Senator Jim 8 Scott, who served during the previous reapportionment 9 process and is the Senate lead counsel on reapportionment 10 and redistricting. Senator Scott.</p> <p>11 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members. 12 As indicated, I am the counsel to the Florida Senate for 13 reapportionment, together with my House counterpart, Miguel 14 DeGrandy, counsel for the House, today is my turn to give 15 the members, and especially the members of the public, an 16 overview of the law regarding redistricting and 17 reapportionment. This is by no means intended to be 18 comprehensive presentation, but just an introduction of the 19 basic principles. As the Chairman indicated, 20 reapportionment in Florida is the responsibility of the 21 Florida Legislature and it is mandated every 10 years after 22 the United States Census. Because of Florida's population 23 increase over the last ten years Florida will have two 24 additional members of Congress, a total of 25 seats instead 25 of the current 23. And part of the duties for the</p> <p>DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 9</p> <p>1 Now, we have certain redistricting principles that the 2 Legislature will be guided by, and these include the 3 principle of one person, one vote. And also the 4 requirements of the United States Constitution and Federal 5 Statutes. The idea commonly referred to as one person, one 6 vote, developed from a series of landmark cases in the 7 1960s by the United States Supreme Court. Generally, what 8 this principle says is that each person's vote in Florida 9 should count the same. Prior to these cases in Florida and 10 some other states, the House district could have 250,000 11 people in an urban House district and maybe only 50,000 in 12 a rural district.</p> <p>13 In fact, at one point in Florida, I think all counties 14 in Florida had their own Senator, even if they only had 15 like 5,000 people versus, say, Miami that had several 16 hundred thousand. So, the Supreme Court determined that 17 this was not in accordance with the Constitution, and so, 18 therefore, we try to have it as close as possible to equal 19 representation. However, you can have some variation. I 20 know most of the members are familiar with this. In the 21 legislative plans, the courts have under certain 22 circumstances upheld as much as a 10 percent deviation from 23 the ideal number.</p> <p>24 In a moment our staff will present the numbers for 25 Congressional House and Senate, but a deviation of up to</p> <p>DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 10</p> <p>1 10 percent has been permitted by the courts and legislated. 2 However, this is not true for Congressional. In general, 3 they have been very strict about, no more than one percent, 4 and with the goal of having exactly the same number of 5 people in each Congressional District. 6 The Voting Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Protection 7 Clause of the United States have become very important in 8 any redistricting by the state. Section 2 of the Voting 9 Rights Act prohibits any practice or procedure, including 10 redistricting practices, that impairs the ability of a 11 minority community to elect candidates of choice on an 12 equal basis with nonminority voters. 13 Florida is also one of the states that contains 14 certain jurisdictions that are subject to review under 15 Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which is commonly 16 referred to as the preclearance section. Section 5 17 requires that covered jurisdictions submit prior to 18 implementation any proposed changes to their practices or 19 procedures, including redistricting for approval of either 20 the Attorney General of the United States or the Federal 21 District Court of the District of Columbia. This process 22 is known as preclearance. 23 In Florida the covered jurisdictions include Collier, 24 Hardy, Hendry, Hillsborough and Monroe Counties. The vast 25 majority of these requests -- and it is our intention to DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 12</p> <p>1 next few minutes is take a little bit of time to outline 2 the demographic underpinnings for redistricting that will 3 occur in 2001, 2002 in Florida. The first fact that we 4 need to be aware of in looking at Florida's population 5 growth in the last ten years is that Florida is a very 6 rapidly growing state. The state has grown between 1990 7 and 2000 by 3 million people or 23.5 percent. As a result 8 of this rapid growth, Florida's Congressional delegation 9 will increase by two, for a total of 25 members of the U.S. 10 House of Representatives. 11 The other fact that we need to be aware of in 12 considering Florida's rapid growth is that the growth has 13 not been uniform, some areas have grown rapidly, other 14 areas have grown more slowly. For instance, Flagler County 15 in the northeast part of the state has grown at a rate of 16 73.6 percent. Sumter County grew at a rate of 69 percent. 17 Collier County, just to our south, grew at a rate of 18 65.3 percent. And Wakulla County in the Panhandle grew at 19 a rate of 61 percent. Osceola County, south of Disney 20 World, grew at a rate of 60 percent. 21 On the other end of the spectrum, Monroe County, the 22 slowest growing county in the state, grew at a rate during 23 the ten-year period of only 2 percent. Pinellas and Putnam 24 Counties grew at rate of about 8 percent, and Gadsden 25 County, again in the Panhandle, grew at rate of DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 11</p> <p>1 apply it to the Attorney General versus the District Court 2 in Washington. 3 So, this has to be done and when the plan is actually 4 completed, and I think that means approved by the Florida 5 Supreme Court. And then the Attorney General has up to 60 6 days to object to the plan. If they approve it before then 7 or fail to object within 60 days, then it becomes law. The 8 test that they require, that the Constitution requires, is 9 that the covered jurisdictions bear the burden of 10 demonstrating that the proposed voting change does not have 11 the purpose and will not have the effect of denying or 12 abridging the right to vote on account of race, or color, 13 or membership in a language minority group. 14 In conclusion, let me just say that the rules are 15 somewhat complicated. This is a short presentation of some 16 rather delicate legal issues, some of which have not been 17 fully decided by the courts. However, with my House 18 colleague, we are ready to assist you today and throughout 19 this process. Thank you. 20 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you, Senator Scott. And I 21 would like to recognize John Guthrie who is the technical 22 staff director for the Senate redistricting committee who 23 will share some information about the 2000 Census. 24 MR. GUTHRIE: Thank you Chairman Webster, Chairman 25 Byrd, members of the committee, what I'm going to do in the DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p> <p>1 9.7 percent. 2 Bringing our focus to the local area, in Hendry County 3 the population increased by 40.5 percent to 36,210 people. 4 With that growth, Hendry County now ranks 44th among 5 Florida's 67 counties. Glades County, just to our north, 6 the population increased by 39 percent to a total of 10,576 7 people, which ranks Glades County 65th among Florida's 67 8 counties. 9 As Senator Scott was explaining, all of this is 10 predicated by the United States Census and Article One of 11 the United States Constitution provides that there will be 12 a decennial census for the expressed purpose of making 13 sure that districts are equal in population. Districts 14 that now have substantially too many people based on the 15 2000 Census or disparities in growth that have appeared 16 during the decade will become smaller. And districts that 17 are substantially underpopulated or have too few people are 18 going to need to gain territory in order to come to the 19 right size. 20 Back in 1990 the average population for Congressional 21 districts was 562,519 people; this will increase by 22 14 percent in 2000, so that the average size of a 23 congressional district will be just under 640,000 people. 24 By the same token, based on the '90 Census, the average 25 population per Senate district was 323,000, the average DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 14</p> <p>1 population per House district was 108,000; these will 2 increase at the same rate as the population growth of the 3 state, or 23.5 percent, to roughly 400,000 people per 4 Senate district and 133,000 people per House district. 5 This graphic of the population growth over the past 6 ten years shows how, in relevant terms, the population of 7 Congressional Senate and House districts will be affected. 8 And what we can gather from this is that the proportionate 9 increase of Senate districts and House districts is greater 10 than that for Congressional Districts for the simple reason 11 that we were adding two additional Congressional Districts 12 to the state delegation. Looking at changes in population 13 density over the ten-year period, what we see is that the 14 suburban areas west or east of Naples and surrounding the 15 Fort Myers area have grown rapidly as have some of the 16 areas in the western gold coast. 17 You see a little bit of growth in the Port LaBelle 18 area, or the LaBelle area, and in the Immokalee area as 19 well. When we look at the change relative to the state 20 average we get a little bit different of a picture, and it 21 shows that areas that had fewer people back in 1990 have 22 grown by the most rapid rates. Now, what is the 23 implication of this for redistricting? The maps that were 24 available for the public as handouts on the back table 25 shows how much the Congressional Districts, Senate DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 16</p> <p>1 we would ask you, if you would like to speak and haven't 2 filled one out, there are some in the back, on the table in 3 the back. And you will also notice there is a number in 4 the bottom right-hand side of your speaker's card and we 5 will be calling you by number so that everyone gets to 6 speak and we can move quickly. Please remember that in 7 order to ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak we 8 are limiting each speaker to four minutes, and of course, 9 we would also welcome any written submissions that you 10 might have to present today or at a subsequent time. 11 If you have any handouts, be sure to give them to the 12 staff or you can lay them on this front table and we will 13 make sure that they get passed out. Okay, we are ready to 14 start. And we'll start with number one, if you are ready. 15 MS. JANET TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, and members of this 16 committee, good morning and welcome to Hendry County, I'm 17 Janet Boswell (phonetic) Taylor, I live up in Clewiston, 18 Harlem, which is a part of the 23rd Congressional District, 19 District 29 of the Florida state district and District 77 20 of the Florida House of Representatives. I want to talk to 21 you this morning about the importance of keeping Harlem in 22 the 23rd Congressional District. 23 First, I represent a predominantly minority community. 24 My colleagues I hope will talk about the rural area of 25 Hendry County in general. But I know that the DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 15</p> <p>1 Districts and House Districts are overpopulated or 2 underpopulated relative to the average population based on 3 the 2000 population. 4 And what we gathered from that is that Congressional 5 District 16 and Congressional District 14 are two of the 6 most rapidly growing Congressional Districts in the nation, 7 so they will need to become smaller in order to equalize 8 population. Looking at Senate districts we see that Senate 9 district number 25 in the Charlotte and Naples area is 10 significantly overpopulated, again, whereas the districts 11 for Hendry and Glades counties are closer to equal 12 population. 13 The white colors indicate that the population will not 14 necessarily need to change by a whole lot in order to 15 equalize the district population. We see the same pattern 16 with House districts, that some areas have grown more 17 rapidly, some areas have grown less rapidly. All of the 18 information that I have covered here this morning is 19 available on the House and Senate web sites, and I would 20 encourage the public and members who would like to get more 21 in-depth understanding of all of these figures to visit 22 those sites. 23 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you, Mr. Guthrie. Ladies and 24 gentlemen, as I said earlier, we will be using these 25 speaker cards in order to -- for the audience to speak, and DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p> <p>1 redistricting is about the allocation of political power. 2 Those who decide where our boundary lines are drawn decide 3 where our future lies; they will decide who is represented 4 and who is not. They will decide whether historically 5 disadvantaged communities will remain disadvantaged or 6 whether they will be given the same rights and 7 representation to which every person is entitled. You, I 8 believe, will make those decisions, ladies and gentlemen; 9 you have that power and that responsibility. 10 In fairness to all concerned in this progress, we ask 11 you to do what's best for every community. We want to keep 12 our Congressman, as he's represented us well in Washington 13 and his presence in our community is very prevalent. 14 We also need to keep our State Representative as he 15 knows our needs and feels our compassion. Both men have 16 represented us well because they know and understand the 17 needs of our rural town, our schools, and most of all their 18 willingness to work with our local government has been 19 beneficial to all. We want the process to be fair and the 20 outcome will automatically be fair. 21 I hope the issue of setting forth public criteria as 22 to how districts will be drawn have been addressed. These 23 criteria could directly affect rational minorities. The 24 kind of census data that you would use, the accuracy of the 25 census data is a real concern, as we know that the census DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p> <p>1 under-count minorities.</p> <p>2 We do not want to lose our great representation for</p> <p>3 the sake of putting partisan politics above the wishes of</p> <p>4 the people of our community. We are the minutest part of</p> <p>5 the 23rd Congressional District, but we are well</p> <p>6 represented in all functions of Congressman Hastings.</p> <p>7 Clewiston High School students have benefited by the way of</p> <p>8 scholarship from being a part of his Congressional</p> <p>9 District. Congressman Hastings himself was the main</p> <p>10 attraction in our community that netted over \$100,000 for</p> <p>11 the construction of our new Harlem library. So, to this</p> <p>12 committee, please do not do anything that will disrupt the</p> <p>13 effective representation we now have.</p> <p>14 In closing, we just want fairness and inclusiveness,</p> <p>15 thank you very much.</p> <p>16 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number two.</p> <p>17 MR. LOCKHART: Good morning, my name is David</p> <p>18 Lockhart, I currently live in Lehigh Acres in the 14th</p> <p>19 Congressional District. I understand, just based on census</p> <p>20 figures, that the 14th district will have to be split up in</p> <p>21 some manner. There was an article in the paper that</p> <p>22 appeared to exclude Lehigh Acres from the new formation and</p> <p>23 that it would possibly be spun off into what appeared to be</p> <p>24 the 16th District, Congressman Foley's district out of Palm</p> <p>25 Beach Gardens, Florida.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 20</p> <p>1 With us today we have Larry Lucky, our property appraiser,</p> <p>2 Joanne Greer, our tax collector, Jim Writer, our sheriff,</p> <p>3 Joe Flint, clerk of circuit court, Tom Johnson, county</p> <p>4 commission, and Norm Ryan, a community leader. We believe</p> <p>5 that citizens of Glades County would be best represented if</p> <p>6 the Senate and House seats were aligned with rural counties</p> <p>7 that are similar to Glades County's demographics, problems,</p> <p>8 issues and needs. We believe that coastal counties have</p> <p>9 issues and needs that are unique to their economy. Their</p> <p>10 issues of growth and service differ greatly from ours.</p> <p>11 Therefore, we ask that you consider including Glades County</p> <p>12 in a district that's more comparable with our needs. Thank</p> <p>13 you.</p> <p>14 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number four.</p> <p>15 MR. JORDAN: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee,</p> <p>16 my name is Mike Jordan, I am a resident of the local area.</p> <p>17 I'm here today representing the Hendry County Economic</p> <p>18 Development Council and standing in for Larry Hall with the</p> <p>19 CHIP organization, Citizens Highway Initiative Program. We</p> <p>20 have some serious concerns about the redistricting. As you</p> <p>21 well know, you -- there's a great deal of difference</p> <p>22 between the urban areas and the more urban agriculture</p> <p>23 areas; our needs are quite different. We have real</p> <p>24 problems with our roads, bridges, we have real problems</p> <p>25 with educational funding, teachers' salaries being</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p> <p>1 Lehigh Acres is a quickly growing but small community.</p> <p>2 It is -- the term newlyweds and nearly-deads applies very</p> <p>3 aptly to Lehigh Acres. We are joined at the hip with Fort</p> <p>4 Myers. To separate Lehigh Acres from Fort Myers in a</p> <p>5 Congressional District would be a huge disservice to the</p> <p>6 residents of Lehigh. I know these figures are very</p> <p>7 difficult, but between Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee,</p> <p>8 and Collier Counties, there should be enough, or possibly</p> <p>9 enough to get the three Congressional Districts out of what</p> <p>10 are now two. As regard to State Senate District 35,</p> <p>11 currently Senator Rossin's district, Lehigh Acres is a</p> <p>12 member of that district.</p> <p>13 I implore you to exclude or emancipate Lehigh Acres</p> <p>14 from Senator Rossin if at all possible. Senator Rossin may</p> <p>15 very well represent the population of Palm Beach County as</p> <p>16 his conduct in the period of November through December the</p> <p>17 year 2000 was reflective by the other conduct of the county</p> <p>18 officials in Palm Beach County, it did not in any way,</p> <p>19 shape, or form represent my beliefs nor the majority of the</p> <p>20 beliefs of the population of Lehigh Acres. Thank you very</p> <p>21 much.</p> <p>22 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number three.</p> <p>23 MR. WARD: Mr. Chairman, committee members, I am here</p> <p>24 today representing Glades County, I am speaking today on</p> <p>25 behalf of some of the elected officials of Glades County.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 21</p> <p>1 competitive, we lose our teachers to the different coasts,</p> <p>2 and getting educational facilities built in these areas are</p> <p>3 creating a real problem. I know you have got budget</p> <p>4 constraints and that doesn't help any. Part of the</p> <p>5 problems that we are running into, though, could be better</p> <p>6 dealt with if we were truly represented. There are three</p> <p>7 basic concepts that seem to be coming into play here. One</p> <p>8 is the horizontal concept between the coast, including us,</p> <p>9 and some type of alignment with the east and the west</p> <p>10 coast. We have tried that, it has not worked, and the</p> <p>11 State Senate situation, as well as some of the others, we</p> <p>12 may or may not have been represented to the extent that we</p> <p>13 could have been. We have tried it, it hasn't worked;</p> <p>14 therefore, we would strongly urge you to eliminate this</p> <p>15 from consideration.</p> <p>16 The remaining two, number one is a Central Florida</p> <p>17 type rural district, conceptually Representative Spratt,</p> <p>18 for example, has worked very well, he's done really well in</p> <p>19 representing us because his primary constituents are</p> <p>20 basically rural. That, as I say, may or may not have been</p> <p>21 the case with some of the others. Such a creation would</p> <p>22 protect the interest of the rural communities. It creates</p> <p>23 a real problem in great creating districts like that</p> <p>24 because of the demographics. You go and you throw a very</p> <p>25 large metropolitan area into the mix and pretty soon the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p> <p>1 rural communities are lowest. So, please take a look at 2 this but be very careful as to where those boundaries are. 3 The second or the third one is to put us in with 4 Southwest Florida. We have had excellent cooperation with 5 the governmental entities, legislative delegations of 6 Collier and Lee County. They have been very helpful to us 7 in the past and we have a lot of common interests, those 8 ranging from agriculture to road and transportation issues. 9 Basically, our position is a request that you please 10 eliminate our involvement with the east coast, consider the 11 Central Florida more of rural-type districts as possible. 12 If all else fails, we have no problem whatsoever in working 13 very closely with our west coast allies. They have helped 14 us in the past and we know that they will support us in the 15 future, so thank you very much. 16 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number five. 17 MR. BECK: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, committee, my 18 name is Paul Beck, I am a resident of a small rural 19 community in Glades County. And what I would like to do is 20 to ask for your caution whenever you are doing this 21 redistricting, to keep us small communities in mind. We 22 have now our Congressman and state representative, they 23 know who we are, they know our needs, they know our 24 community, and they have been there to help us whenever we 25 need help. We need this continued service and please keep DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p> <p>1 of and God Bless America. Thank you. 2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you for appearing. Number 3 seven. 4 MR. TIREY: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, 5 Senators, representatives, ladies, gentlemen, my name is 6 Steve Tirey, I am the president and chief executive officer 7 of the Chamber of Southwest Florida. We are an 8 organization of regional employers in Lee, Charlotte, 9 Hendry, Glades, and Collier Counties. And our primary 10 interest is that representation for Southwest Florida come 11 from Southwest Florida. These new Congressional 12 legislative districts for our region we believe must be 13 geographically cohesive and not attached to east coast 14 districts. Our Chamber of Commerce, upon action of its 15 Board of Directors in July, supports redistricting plans 16 that assure representatives in the Florida Legislature and 17 U.S. Congress reside within the region of Southwest 18 Florida. Further, we support cohesive districts whose 19 geographic boundaries reflect the demographics of Southwest 20 Florida. 21 The Chamber specifically rejects any redistricting 22 plans that may link Southwest Florida with any political 23 districts on the east coast. We urge our law makers to 24 draw boundaries that preserve or enhance opportunities for 25 representation from the Southwest Florida coastal counties DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p> <p>1 us in your considerations and don't throw us out with the 2 bath water when you are done because we are a small 3 community. Thank you very much. 4 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number six. 5 MR. MADDOX: Mr. Chairman, members, first, I would 6 like to know if the audience would like to join me in 7 applauding these men and ladies for being down here, I have 8 never seen this much power in Hendry County in my lifetime. 9 (Applaud.) 10 MR. MADDOX: Y'all have got a task before you that I'm 11 not at all envious of. I'm a resident of Hendry County, 12 life-long resident. We are an agricultural community. We 13 are changing like everything else is in the State of 14 Florida, a rapid change. And change is good to some sense, 15 but what I would like you all to consider, and most of the 16 people that I have talked to in Hendry County would like 17 you to consider, is to try to keep rural with rural. The 18 larger counties have the larger votes and whenever you 19 start trying to get things done and passed through 20 Tallahassee a lot of that goes with votes, and y'all 21 understand that and we understand that, and there's nothing 22 wrong with that, but if we could have a heartland district 23 that would tend to the residential or the rural people, the 24 agricultural people, we would greatly appreciate it. But 25 like I've said, y'all have got a job that I'm not envious DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p> <p>1 and those immediately adjacent to us. I want to thank you 2 very much for bringing this issue to the citizens of 3 Florida. I know that you are investing a considerable 4 amount of your time on the road and we certainly appreciate 5 your being here today. Thank you very much. 6 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number eight. 7 MR. LESTER: Mr. Chairman and members of the 8 committee, I too would like you to thank you for coming to 9 Hendry County and meet with us today and learn of our 10 particular interests. I am a resident of Hendry County, my 11 name is Bernie Lester. The company who employs me has 12 operating interests in Hendry, Collier, and Lee County. 13 There are a number of reasons that have been given here 14 this morning with which we would also concur, but I want to 15 limit my remarks to two specific areas that our company has 16 been closely involved with and are of concern to us. Ten 17 years ago the Southwest Florida community was successful in 18 convincing the Florida Legislature to locate the university 19 in Florida, in our Southwest Florida area. Such was 20 accomplished because of a very focused effort by the 21 Southwest Florida community including the legislative 22 delegation. There were other geographical areas of the 23 state, including the east coast of Florida, that were also 24 seeking that university. Last year, as you are quite 25 aware, the Legislature eliminated the overall policy board DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p> <p>1 for Florida's universities, the Board of Regents, and 2 instead implemented a procedure which provides a board of 3 trustees for each individual university. 4 Obviously, with this change, lobbying efforts by 5 individual universities direct to the Legislature will 6 intensify. A new university support by few alumni and a 7 minority of a district's voters will face the political 8 reality of competing against other universities with many 9 alumina and a majority of the districts voters. 10 Another focused effort by the Southwest Florida 11 community and legislative delegation will be necessary to 12 obtain reasonable appropriations for Florida Gulf Coast 13 University. Reaction to the citrus canker eradication 14 program is another example of contrasting interests by the 15 general population of the two coasts of Florida. Whereas 16 the citrus and urban areas of Southwest Florida have 17 cooperated to eradicate canker, the east coast urban area 18 has filed court challenges to stimy the eradication 19 program. 20 Together our unified region has made great strides in 21 the past decade. Future successes of the same degree would 22 not necessarily be expected if Southwest Florida is 23 represented primarily by elected officials faced with the 24 practicality of prioritizing among the competing interests 25 of citizens located on both coasts of Florida. In our mind DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p> <p>1 they were more like a checker board, they would be more 2 fair for everyone, the large communities as well as the 3 small communities because we would all have equal 4 representation and we would all be close to whatever type 5 of community we were in, whether it was a major city or 6 whether it was a major rural area. So, if it's done that 7 way, and I hope and I trust that most of you will do that, 8 then I'm sure that everybody will be happy. And I also 9 want to thank you for, first of all, being interested in 10 taxpayer's remarks and positions, and also for coming to 11 hear them, we didn't have to go to you. So, thank you and 12 God bless you. 13 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Number ten. 14 MS. MCGILL: Good morning. My name is Betsy McGill, I 15 am a resident of Hendry County, but I'm here to today to 16 represent the Gulf Citrus Growers Association. On behalf 17 of Southwest Florida Gulf Growers, the Gulf Citrus Growers 18 Association would like to go on the record in support of 19 redistricting plans which would enhance the collective 20 interest of the citizens and businesses in Southwest 21 Florida. Our association represents 147 Citrus growers and 22 114,000 acres of citrus in Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee 23 Counties. We produce about 25 percent of Florida's total 24 Citrus crop. 25 We feel that Southwest Florida is a community of DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p> <p>1 it has nothing to do with current personalities, but with 2 the general practicality of how our system works. And I 3 agree with a previous speaker, it's fine how it works, but 4 prioritizing when you have considerable different interests 5 in a district is a very difficult situation. 6 Consequently, we feel that it's critically important 7 to the future of Southwest Florida that our Southwest 8 Florida area remain together as a community of common 9 interests with representation by officials that live and 10 work here, drive our roads and understand the unique needs 11 of our economic and educational system. Thank you for 12 being with us today. 13 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number nine. 14 MR. BRACKEN: Mr. Chairman, committee members, my name 15 is Bill Brackin, I am from Lehigh Acres and I also 16 represent the United Seniors Association, locally of 17 course. I'm here to ask the impossible, this morning, I 18 would like to see this redistricting done without politics, 19 and I'm sure that's impossible. What I would like to see 20 something as near a checker board as possible. I would 21 like to see it -- obviously you can't make them all square, 22 but I would like to see them -- when you look at a map, you 23 don't see the gerrymandered districts as we have now from 24 coast and coast and long ones and all types. Like I said, 25 I would like to see them more like a checker board. And if DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p> <p>1 common interests with an integrated transportation system, 2 a regional educational network through Florida Gulf Coast 3 University, joint involvement with regional agencies, 4 including the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, 5 and a local economy that's regional in nature with a strong 6 reliance on agricultural, service, and tourism industries 7 in all counties. Further, we feel that representatives who 8 live, work and drive in Southwest Florida will best 9 understand the region's issues related to growth, 10 transportation, education, and the economy. 11 And we have concerns that redistricting in Southwest 12 Florida using by-coastal or otherwise split districts could 13 ultimately result in less representation in one of the 14 state's and nation's fastest growing regions. In summary, 15 the Association feels that representation by leaders who 16 are linked geographically to our region in the Florida 17 Legislature and in the U.S. Congress is in the best 18 interest of Southwest Florida. 19 We appreciate your leadership on this important issue 20 and we look forward to working with the committee in the 21 coming months, thank you. 22 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 11. 23 MR. VAN DUZER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of 24 the committee, thank you for coming here into our region. 25 My name is Bill Van Duzer and I am a member of the American DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 30</p> <p>1 Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. I 2 myself happen to be a foster care counselor and I'm in my 3 13th year of employment. Living to the west of Lake 4 Okeechobee, I can tell you that all of us here identify 5 much more with the Gulf Coast than the east coast. I would 6 ask you to strongly resist any efforts to include us in 7 Miami, Broward, or Palm Beach Counties. We will never be 8 heard and we will not be able to have access and such 9 districts will not be compatible or sensible.</p> <p>10 I also ask that after the public has put its input on 11 the first draft when it is drawn, that we have an 12 opportunity to look at that first draft and -- or that we 13 could see what is on your mind and in consideration.</p> <p>14 And the last thing that I'm asking is that we have 15 some evening meetings. I had to take vacation time to be 16 here this morning, happy to do it, and very pleased to have 17 you here.</p> <p>18 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Twelve.</p> <p>19 MS. STORTER: Good morning, thank you for giving us 20 this opportunity. My name is Donna Storter, I reside in 21 Oratona (phonetic) in Glades County, Florida, we are rural, 22 agricultural. Several speakers before me have expressed it 23 better than I can, including, and I would preclude you to 24 include us, if we must change, with the Gulf Coast rather 25 than east coast. I know that you are not going to please DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 32</p> <p>1 coast. Thank you.</p> <p>2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 14.</p> <p>3 MR. McCARTHY: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, 4 my name is Kevin McCarthy, I am a city commissioner from 5 the City of Clewiston, I thank you for allowing us to be a 6 part of this process. Clewiston is the easternmost point 7 in Hendry County and we often get dragged into the east 8 coast we have determined. We have had, on occasion, 9 excellent representation from the east coast. But I would 10 implore you not to split the county. We have had a lot of 11 representatives from Hendry County -- we get split a lot of 12 times. We get our newspaper from the east coast, we get 13 our news from the west coast, sometimes we don't know where 14 we belong.</p> <p>15 But I think the Post don't think we know where we 16 belong; we think we know where we belong. And I would ask 17 that you, if we can't have a truly rural representation as 18 we do pretty well now with Joe Spratt going up the center 19 of the state in the heartland, then you would include us in 20 the Southwest community. We are certainly part of the 21 Southwest Regional Planning Council, the Southwest Regional 22 Economic Development Council, we fall into -- our ideals 23 are certainly more closely bonded to the west coast than to 24 the east coast. And I would appreciate your consideration, 25 thank you.</p> <p>DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 31</p> <p>1 everybody anyway, but thanks for listening.</p> <p>2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you, number 13.</p> <p>3 MS. VALCY: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and staff 4 members, my name is Jean Valcy, I am a resident of Collier 5 County and I live in Immokalee, Florida. On behalf of the 6 residents of Immokalee, Florida, I thank you very much for 7 giving me this opportunity to express my deep concern in 8 regard to this matter. Over the past few years the 9 Immokalee community has developed a very strong 10 relationship with Collier in terms of creating partnership 11 in employee needs, housing issues, agricultural issues, 12 education, transportation issues, voting rights, and 13 economic needs.</p> <p>14 In contrast to other communities, the rural community 15 of Immokalee has unique needs that have been addressed by 16 our local Federal representative. If you want to split 17 from Collier County to the east coast, those needs might 18 not have the deserving attention that are now being handled 19 by our local Federal representative. And also we believe 20 that representatives who live, work, and drive in Southwest 21 Florida will best understand the needs and issues related 22 to the growth of transportation, education, and the 23 economic.</p> <p>24 To protect the interests of the residents of 25 Immokalee, please do not concentrate Immokalee to the east DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 33</p> <p>1 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 15.</p> <p>2 MS. NOURSE: Mr. Chairman and members of the 3 committee, I have just three things that I would like to 4 say. I am a private citizen and I am a transplant from the 5 North and I dearly love this county. I am very sad that 6 this 10:00 a.m. meeting could not have been held at a later 7 time so that more of our citizens could have been here. We 8 do not have enough people to have our own county 9 representation but we would like to see an all agriculture, 10 right up the middle of the state. The east side and the 11 west side of this state truly do not know what we go 12 through in the agriculture.</p> <p>13 I was told this morning some of the people on the 14 coast think that milk comes from the bottle. That is 15 pretty sad. If we cannot be a district up the center of 16 the state, then we would prefer to go with the west coast. 17 We have had one argument this year with a, what we call, 18 dumping from the east coast. That was the incinerator that 19 was going to go into Pine Air Plantation. We don't want to 20 be dumping grounds, we are -- we are expanding a lot faster 21 than what we really expected.</p> <p>22 Representative Spratt understands our needs and he has 23 done great things for the district. We do not want the 24 east coast representatives; we would like to see 25 representatives that have our needs in mind. Thank you.</p> <p>DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 34</p> <p>1 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 16.</p> <p>2 MAYOR CRAICHY: Chairman Webster, what a pleasure to</p> <p>3 see you here, and gentlemen from the Legislature, it is an</p> <p>4 honor to stand before you, I have seen you from up high</p> <p>5 looking down on your work and it's kind of neat to stand</p> <p>6 above you looking at you working again. This is flip a</p> <p>7 coin, okay. I am speaking for the city of LaBelle as well</p> <p>8 as my experience with our political representatives.</p> <p>9 Congressman Mark Foley is a gift straight from heaven to</p> <p>10 this area. Joe Spratt, our representative Joe Spratt, is</p> <p>11 our first representative from LaBelle, except for his</p> <p>12 father many, many years ago. It is a pleasure to walk down</p> <p>13 the street and knock on his door and say, Joe, we have got</p> <p>14 to have so and so, and we can speak shorthand with him</p> <p>15 because he's experienced everything that we experience.</p> <p>16 And we are very, very grateful and sorry about term</p> <p>17 limits because we won't always have Joe, okay, and it will</p> <p>18 be very strange for us because we are spoiled, okay. Then</p> <p>19 we have Senator Geller, he is sent straight from heaven.</p> <p>20 Senator Geller actually knows where we are, we are to come</p> <p>21 and eat pie. And when we call, he listens. He is a</p> <p>22 representative of the people of LaBelle. Senator Geller</p> <p>23 found out where LaBelle was and he actually goes with us on</p> <p>24 issues that we need, majority issues. We would like to</p> <p>25 keep Senator Geller forever and ever, and my theory and</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 36</p> <p>1 know we are here.</p> <p>2 It is even scarier to take what's left on the east</p> <p>3 coast after our representation leaves us. And it has been</p> <p>4 great for the City of LaBelle to be the stepchild of the</p> <p>5 east coast because we are like, don't change what we have</p> <p>6 got, we just can't stand losing what we have got. But if</p> <p>7 we don't luck up next time, you won't understand me when I</p> <p>8 come to Tallahassee to see you to tell us about our</p> <p>9 problems.</p> <p>10 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thirteen seconds.</p> <p>11 MAYOR CRAICHY: The logical thing to do is go</p> <p>12 agricultural interest throughout for us as long as you keep</p> <p>13 the interest closely associated with Southwest Florida.</p> <p>14 That is the logical thing. I appreciate your listening.</p> <p>15 Thank you.</p> <p>16 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 17.</p> <p>17 MS. SAMPSON: To the chairman and committee, I am</p> <p>18 happy to have the opportunity to speak to all of you. I</p> <p>19 live in Immokalee and I have been a resident of Immokalee</p> <p>20 for a long time. And I am standing here for the seniors of</p> <p>21 Immokalee and the other citizens of Immokalee because</p> <p>22 Collier County is a voter's right county and it is covered</p> <p>23 by this act until 2007. Certain preference and standards</p> <p>24 need to be considered first, for minority groups from</p> <p>25 Southwest Florida must not be disenfranchised. They should</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 35</p> <p>1 what I feel like telling you is, if it ain't broken, don't</p> <p>2 fix it because we are extremely fortunate.</p> <p>3 Unfortunately term limits are going to change our</p> <p>4 position. And we have difficulties in several respects,</p> <p>5 okay. The people in Fort Myers read the Fort Myers News</p> <p>6 Press. The Fort Myers News Press is sent to LaBelle, it is</p> <p>7 our daily newspaper. You can't find anything about LaBelle</p> <p>8 in the Fort Myers News Press most days. The classifieds or</p> <p>9 the deaths you can read, but there's very, very little. On</p> <p>10 occasion they will go out of their way and they will cover</p> <p>11 LaBelle.</p> <p>12 If we are going shopping, meaning the public goes</p> <p>13 shopping in Fort Myers, the first thing they say to us is,</p> <p>14 when we are writing a check or whatever is, "Wow, you had</p> <p>15 to drive a long way to get here didn't you." And that is</p> <p>16 the general public in Fort Myers. So we are not a part of</p> <p>17 them even though we drove less time to get to Fort Myers</p> <p>18 than they drive to get to their own work, okay.</p> <p>19 It is extremely difficult because the representation</p> <p>20 that we have this year is one that I don't want to make any</p> <p>21 decisions on but I have to think about in the years when we</p> <p>22 don't have this. And I have got to say, I hate to</p> <p>23 segregate, it is very scary to segregate and go only with</p> <p>24 agricultural interests and it is very scary to go with a</p> <p>25 population that virtually is growing so fast they hardly</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 37</p> <p>1 be represented by someone familiar with their needs and</p> <p>2 interests who is familiar with their communities. Second,</p> <p>3 the needs of the Southwest Florida minority communities</p> <p>4 must get their attention to focus on what they deserve.</p> <p>5 This could not happen if they must compete for grants,</p> <p>6 funds, and recognition against the east coast of Florida.</p> <p>7 Finally, to ensure racial fairness, Southwest Florida</p> <p>8 minority communities must be allowed to remain intact to</p> <p>9 maintain the rigidness of their cultures and their common</p> <p>10 interests. I hope you will ensure that Southwest Florida</p> <p>11 can meet the provisions of the Voting Rights Act and hence</p> <p>12 the preclearance standards of the justice committee. I</p> <p>13 further urge you to maintain the economic, geographic, and</p> <p>14 cultural integrity of Southwest Florida's minority</p> <p>15 communities by preserving the existing code of</p> <p>16 Congressional District 14 and/or resisting any attempt to</p> <p>17 split it in any fashion. I thank you.</p> <p>18 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Number 18.</p> <p>19 MR. PELHAM: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee,</p> <p>20 thank you again for coming to LaBelle to hear our concerns.</p> <p>21 My name is Bo Pelham, I am a chairman of the Hendry County</p> <p>22 Commission. A couple of things that I would like to ask</p> <p>23 that, if possible during this redistricting, that you</p> <p>24 include us with counties that are in tune with our</p> <p>25 population and size, interior counties, you know, counties</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 38</p> <p>1 that have ag-based economies, strong ag-based economies and 2 people that understand that that is our living and our 3 livelihood, a lot of it. And our representation from the 4 east coast has done a good job for us, but it's no secret 5 that the folks that live on the east coast are not very 6 agriculture oriented, so we would like to be included in 7 the central part of the state, you know, with counties of 8 our size, if possible; if that can't happen then we would 9 like to be tied in with the west coast if possible. Thank 10 you.</p> <p>11 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, 12 members, that is all of the people that have filled out a 13 presentation card. So as we have done in the past, we 14 would like to hear if there are those that would like to 15 speak that are members of the panel. We will begin first 16 with those that are members of the delegation. Senator 17 Geller.</p> <p>18 SENATOR GELLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I would 19 like to welcome you and the other members to Senate 20 District 29. My branch office is located about 20 feet 21 from here over at LaBelle City Hall. My remarks are not 22 remarks that I have discussed with either the Democratic or 23 Republican leadership, I have no idea whether remarks that 24 I'm going to say are good for the Democrat or are good for 25 the Republicans, I'm saying them as the Representative of DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 40</p> <p>1 Broward County.</p> <p>2 The entire citrus canker issue, I have done my best to 3 protect both sides, but again I have not made friends in 4 either camp by doing this. The issues of property rights, 5 riparian rights, there is -- you have heard from the 6 speakers, there is a big difference. I would have a 7 disagreement with some of them, and I would agree with 8 some.</p> <p>9 The issues of LaBelle or Clewiston or Immokalee really 10 are not closely tied in with Naples any more than they are 11 with Fort Lauderdale. And I would agree with the speakers 12 that have spoken thus far that say that it would be helpful 13 to have an agricultural district which would include the 14 agricultural parts of Collier and Hendry and Glades and 15 Highlands and Okeechobee and DeSoto. These are the issues 16 that are important to them. I think it's important too.</p> <p>17 Two other brief remarks. First of all, as the Senator 18 for Everglades City and Chokoloskee, which are part of 19 Collier County, and Immokalee, I would point out that these 20 areas should also be part of whatever agricultural 21 district, if one is set up. Having been to Everglades City 22 and Chokoloskee, even though they are coastal communities 23 they are rural coastal communities that I believe have a 24 great deal more to do with a rural agricultural area than 25 they would with the coastal, you know, Marco Island or DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 39</p> <p>1 this area, of District 29. We heard from Mr. Guthrie the 2 large percentage population increase in Hendry County, and 3 I can certainly understand why so many people would like to 4 move to this lovely area. It's very different from a lot 5 of the areas that I represent. When I do something for the 6 people here, they actually appreciate it. They thank me 7 for it. I have actually received things like pies from 8 here in Hendry County, and when people wave to me here they 9 use all five fingers. This is a substantial difference 10 from the bulk of my Senate district.</p> <p>11 To give you a brief description of Senate District 29, 12 approximately 85 percent of the population in Broward 13 County, probably maybe 5 percent in the Wellington area and 14 then the other 10 percent is in the agricultural area. I 15 have done my best to well represent this area. I do 16 numerous town meetings in Hendry County and I have 17 certainly been here a great deal more than my predecessor, 18 but there is a big difference between the east coast urban 19 area and this rural area.</p> <p>20 Many of my Broward County constituents do believe that 21 they grow tomatoes and oranges at Publix. There have been 22 a series of disagreements. I have not made friends in the 23 85 percent of my district by telling them that sugar is not 24 an evil creature, which is what many of them agree, and 25 which again is a huge difference between Hendry County and DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 41</p> <p>1 Naples because they are not, they are rural areas. Mayor 2 Sammy Hamilton from Everglades City was supposed to be here 3 and he asked to be included with wherever Hendry County 4 went. Unfortunately he had to take his mother to the 5 hospital, so he asked me to make those remarks on his 6 behalf.</p> <p>7 The last issue I wanted stressed again is, 8 specifically, Immokalee, Belle Glade and South Glade, those 9 are your agricultural parts of coastal counties. I am 10 familiar with and have done my best to help Immokalee and 11 Belle Glade and South Bay, but they are not -- they have 12 unique needs because they are part of wealthy counties.</p> <p>13 I mean, Immokalee is part of Collier County, which is 14 a wealthy county. Belle Glade and South Glade are part of 15 Palm Beach, which are wealthy counties. As Representative 16 Spratt knows, these areas are not eligible for a lot of the 17 federal programs because the programs are based on a county 18 basis. So they really -- even though they are part of 19 counties that are coastal counties, they are not coastal 20 areas. And I would urge that as lines are being drawn, 21 these rural areas, these agricultural areas, even inside 22 urban counties, be part of, if an agricultural district is 23 set up, that they be part of that.</p> <p>24 Again, Mister -- I want to say Mr. President, again, 25 Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair, whatever it may be -- reflex, you DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 42</p> <p>1 understand. I would like to thank everybody here for 2 coming to Senate District 29. I can assure you have come 3 to a place that reflects, you know, America's values at its 4 best that is a wonderful place to represent. I have 5 enjoyed representing this -- I would love to continue 6 representing Hendry County, I have enjoyed it, they are 7 nice people here. But, again, if they can get part of an 8 agricultural district, they might be better served by that. 9 Thank you, Mr. Chair.</p> <p>10 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank you. Representative Spratt. 11 REPRESENTATIVE SPRATT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I 12 simply want to express my deep gratitude for you and the 13 committee coming to not only my district but my hometown. 14 This is a great thing to have a meeting like this in 15 LaBelle, Florida, and say thank you to all of you people 16 that took your time to come and testify before us. This is 17 what it is about, we did need your testimony, we do want to 18 listen to you. And thank you all very much.</p> <p>19 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Thank other. Any other members? 20 Representative Melvin.</p> <p>21 REPRESENTATIVE MELVIN: Senator, one thing that I wish 22 people would look at, there is a schedule that you can go 23 to on the web site and it shows all of the meetings that we 24 are having all over the state. And I would like to say, 25 the lady that was talking about would like to see this held</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 44</p> <p>1 (No audible response.) 2 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: The meeting is adjourned. 3 (Meeting concluded.) 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 43</p> <p>1 later, we do have a meeting tonight in Naples and then 2 tomorrow we have one in the afternoon in Ft. Myers. So, 3 this area is having a lot of hearings compared to most 4 parts of the state, and if you will look, there are 5 committee meetings being held in the mornings, the 6 afternoons, and the evenings so we can hope that people get 7 here. But we didn't just pick this one for an early 8 morning session.</p> <p>9 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Senator Peaden. 10 SENATOR PEADEN: Mr. Chairman, I don't know who 11 decided where we were going to have these meetings, and I 12 certainly don't think that Representative Spratt prepped 13 anybody, but I haven't said much during all of these 14 occasions, but this is probably the most objective, most 15 analytical group that we have been around in the entire 16 state; especially for some of us folks like Jerry Miller 17 and I who are from the Panhandle, you have given us a 18 better regional approach to redistricting than we have had 19 in any other meetings, be it rural or urban areas.</p> <p>20 I think that is a real area that your community should 21 take pride in, your commitment. And I think that your 22 information will be taken back to Tallahassee and used to 23 the best of the ability of these two chairmen. Thank y'all 24 for having us here today.</p> <p>25 CHAIRMAN WEBSTER: Anyone else?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 45</p> <p>1 CERTIFICATE 2 3 STATE OF FLORIDA: 4 5 COUNTY OF LEON: 6 7 I, MONA L. WHIDDON, Court Reporter, certify that I 8 was authorized to and did stenographically report the 9 foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true and 10 complete record of my stenographic notes. 11 DATED this _____ day of _____, 2001. 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</p> <p style="text-align: right;">MONA L. WHIDDON Court Reporter Division of Administrative Hearings 1230 Apalachee Parkway Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3060 (850) 488-9675 Suncom 278-9675 Fax Filing (850) 921-8453 www.doah.state.fl.us</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS (850) 488-9675</p>